WRL News

Number 198 The War Resisters League Jan - Feb 1977

PROTEST CHINA'S BIGGEST A-TEST

China's biggest atmospheric nuclear test Nov. 17 drew a picket protest sponsored by WRL, SESPA and WSP at the Chinese Mission to the UN. The bomb was estimated to be approximately 20 times more powerful than the one exploded on Oct. 12. Chinese entering the Mission shunned the pickets and refused leaflets which declared "Socialist fallout is just as dangerous as capitalist fallout." *Photo by Karl Bissinger.*

New Chairwoman

Photo by Bradford Lyttle.

Norma Becker, a public school teacher and member of WRL since 1960 and its Executive Committee since 1966, has been elected Chairwoman of the League for a two-year term. She replaces Irma Zigas who had been Chairwoman since 1972.

Norma was involved actively in civil rights struggles since 1963 in Virginia, Mississippi, and New York. Her organizing in the anti-war movement began in 1965, principally with the Fifth Avenue Peace Parade Committee in New York City.

She has participated in other struggles such as defense of the Attica inmates, Coalition on the Economic Crisis, and more recently the Continental Walk in New York City.

Norma's home has been open to movement activities for years ranging from WRL Executive Committee meetings to farewell parties.

Steering Committee

William Douthard, Joanne Sheehan and Allan Solomonow were elected to the WRL Steering Committee for two-year terms. William, Joanne and Allan are all long time members of the League. William, an activist in the civil rights movement, originally from Alabama worked many hours with the Continental Walk. Joanne Sheehan, staff member of Catholic Peace Fellowship for five years and now activating the Community for Nonviolent Action (Voluntown, CT), worked full time with the Continental Walk for the last year. Allan worked with Jewish Peace Fellowship, Committee for New Alternatives in the Middle East and now works with Fellowship of Reconciliation. The staff and Executive Committee are looking forward to working with the new Chairwoman and Steering Committee.

A CALL TO RESIST THE GOVERNMENT Through Non-Payment of Taxes

by Ed Hedemann

McNamara, Clifford, Laird, Schlesinger, Rumsfeld, and now Harold Brown. The names change but the policies remain the same.

During the election campaign, Carter promised a $5 to 7 billion reduction from the $114 billion Defense budget. Who did he appoint but Cal Tech whiz kid Harold "The Bomb" Brown. Brown gained notoriety as Secretary of the Air Force under Johnson for advocating bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong, several years before Nixon and Kissinger actually carried it through.

Brown was recently quoted (December 29, *New York Times*) as saying "I don't think that we look for an absolute reduction of 5 to 7 billion dollars from this year's budget to next year's budget. I'm quite sure that Governor Carter never said that, and that was never his intended meaning." In response to being asked if he would be able to hold the defense budget to the present level in "real dollars" (i.e., an *increase* of about $6 billion to keep up with inflation), Brown said, "I'm not sure."

Any illusions we may have had concerning Carter's commitment to peace must have all but vanished. One response to this continued reliance on militarism is tax resistance. Refusing to pay for the military and any future wars.

Telephone Tax Resistance

The Federal excise tax has only been put on telephone service three times—World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. The expressed purpose of the tax was to raise sorely needed revenue for the wars by spreading it "equitably" over the general population.

So why is the tax, diminishing at the rate of 1% each year, still on telephone service? According to President Nixon when he requested its extension in 1969 to 1982 that the money was needed to pay off the debt of the Vietnam war.

In any case, over 50% of all money collected by the Federal government (excluding trust funds) pays for past wars and preparation for future massacres, maiming, looting, raping, mass deaths, and general slaughter.

The singular advantage of the telephone tax, besides its relationship to the Vietnam War is the helplessness of the government to stop it. The amount of money usually owed for the typical collection period is about three dollars. The collection procedure requires an expenditure of fifty to several hundred dollars (depending on how persistent the tax refuser is)! So the government loses money if it tries to collect. But if it does not attempt collection, then resistance may become rampant.

If the IRS bothers to move against the tax resister, the usual procedure is to send a notice of tax deficiency. Then follow it by one or more other notices, if the resister has not paid up. Often that is all you may hear from the IRS.

However, the IRS may attempt to locate a bank account or employer to steal the money the IRS figures is due. In *extremely rare* instances, if an employer or bank is not found, the IRS has been known to seize property such as a bicycle, TV, car, or even a house to auction off, then return the money less the tax to the resister.

If such extreme measures are resorted to, the resister can "bail out" and pay up at anytime. Or a number of evasive maneuvers can be employed. Many a resister with the aid of supporters has been known to turn the tables on the government by making the auction into an anti-IRS/military publicity event, further dramatizing the destructive policies of the government.

Don't be too disappointed if the government doesn't give you such an opportunity for political drama, since most people who have resisted the telephone tax for any length of time have gotten relatively few notices of deficiency.

In addition to the power of not paying the government, tax resistance lends itself to a powerful *constructive* function—channeling the resisted money into community and other projects.

Tax resisters in a number of areas have banded together their resisted money into "People's Life Funds." These Funds serve three basic purposes: as grants to community groups, as loans, and as a holding agency in case the IRS succeeds in making a collection.

If there is no Life Fund in your area, set one up with other resisters. The amount of money collected in such a fund can quickly accumulate to something significant.

Income Tax Resistance

Though individual Federal income taxes are not explicitly connected with wars (like the telephone tax), they are spent mostly for past and future wars (to say nothing of supplying "brush fire" wars around the world). Nonpayment of income taxes is a different ball game, if only because the amount of money involved is a great deal larger than the telephone tax.

An additional complication to income tax resisters is simply getting the chance to do it. People who receive a wage usually have to fill out a W-4 form which determines the amount of withholding tax. So by the time April 15 rolls around, no money is owed the government (it may even owe you), because your employer has taken out a little each month before you receive your check.

One way to stop this monthly theft is to claim additional exemptions on your W-4 form—either a greater number of dependents or anticipated itemized deductions (e.g., a "military deduction") on schedule A, which supplements IRS form 1040.

Resisters can make a similar protest to that of the telephone tax by not paying a token amount on April 15—$5, $25, or even $100. These amounts are small enough to be an irritant to

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On Trial: The Pentagon Vs. The Continental Walk

By Nancy Clarke Williams, Ed Hedemann, and John Cort

The walkers first went to trial before U.S. Magistrate Harris Grimsley on November 5.

The walkers entered pleas for peace and social justice, and for disarmament as well as innocence. The courtroom atmosphere was one of solidarity with walkers cheerfully voicing their support for each other's statements throughout the presentation of the prosecution's case.

The prosecution took about nine hours to present its case. Each arresting officer, bus driver, and so forth was called, examined, cross-examined, redirect examination ad nauseum. All to prove that only those who were arrested were put on and taken off the buses, and everyone heard the order to disperse. Many of us began to get tired of this charade, calling for an end to this type of questioning saying they have no apologies to make for being at the Pentagon and being arrested.

Though Judge Grimsley allowed a lot of latitude for defendants to make political statements, he made it quite clear that he (and the government) were solely interested to know if each and every defendant was in the roadway adjacent to the Pentagon entrance, if they heard the order to leave, and if they remained. Though apparently sympathetic to the reasons the walkers gave for being at the Pentagon, Grimsley basically felt that it was all irrelevant.

At the end of the government's case, the defense moved for acquittal stating seven obvious reasons why the prosecution had not proven its case. The judge ruled that the government had made a prima facia case. Sixteen walkers, including *WRL News* editor Jim Peck, decided to rest their case and were found guilty and sentenced to six months unsupervised probation and a $25 fine (suspended). Since it was already 7 pm, the judge continued the case three weeks later.

When the trial resumed on November 26 the courtroom atmosphere was made tense by the presence of two U.S. Marshals, who were not present on November 5. The judge was more curt than before, cutting off defendants trying to make statements. Some of us were uninterested in defending ourselves against these ludicrous charges, so we prepared a scroll of indictments against the Pentagon consisting of about 20 feet crimes beginning January 21, 1976 (when the Walk began) until October. These crimes included money spent for weapons, bribes, corruption, deaths of enlisted personnel, etc. After the reading of the charges against the Pentagon, we planned to ask for guilt or innocence from the courtroom, and call for intensive resistance, then walk out of the court. Our problem was *when* during the trial to present these indictments.

The defense attorneys and a few of the defendants made opening remarks. Louise Franklin-Ramirez related in an emotion-filled statement to the court a parable about the need to slay a 6-headed dragon (one head representing pollution, another militarism, etc.) which terrorized the world. The defense began by calling witnesses among those arrested as well as those at the demonstration who were not arrested. The government's contention that only those arrested were put on and taken off the buses was cracked.

The defense attorney, John Zwerling, called as his last witness Ed Hedemann to testify about the permit negotiations. Then John Cohn, who was representing himself, continued the questioning in order to have introduced the "20 feet of charges" against the Pentagon. As Ed began to read (from the witness stand) the charges, the judge interrupted by stating that was irrelevant. Ed argued its relevance, but was ordered to step down, and then finally dragged off the stand and out of the courtroom by two marshals, and thrown into a cell. This resulted in a lot of commotion, particularly when John Cohn was also dragged out after continuing to read where Ed left off. Then another defendant, JoAnn Bonamico, began to read the charges after John threw them across the courtroom, unrolling in the air. At this point, Grimsley declared that the case was closed (even though the defense had not finished its presentation) and cleared the courtroom, rather than be forced to jail all the defendants and supporters. Both Hedemann and Cohn were released after a few minutes with no charges filed against them.

The trial made clear once again that the U.S. judicial system is not a

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the government, but almost not worth the effort and expenses to collect.

Other people prefer to resist paying 35% of the tax "due" as a protest to the current Department of Defense budget. Still others refuse to pay 55% of their taxes which represents past wars (carried forward by the Interest on the National Debt—largely war-created—as well as veterans benefits) plus the current DoD budget.

Some resisters refuse to give *any* money to the Federal government, realizing that 55% of any amount surrendered to the government will be sent to war. None of the foregoing is meant to imply that the other 45% of the Federal budget is good (e.g., expenditures to the FBI, CIA, prisons, bureaucracy, nuclear power, propaganda, inaugural parades, etc.).

At the very least, everyone can send in a message of protest with their 1040 form, whether or not they refuse to pay the government.

Demonstrate on April 15

Though tax resistance usually reflects powerful individual initiative, there are times when it is appropriate to join with others in protesting governmental priorities.

This is one of those opportunities when it is essential to resist the smug self-assuredness of Carter in his dangling a piddling $5 to 7 billion cut in the DoD budget before the voters, only to throw them Harold Brown after November 2.

Significant changes in society will never come with a sudden enlightenment of the ruling class, but by taking to the "streets."

All out on April 15 with leaflets, picketing, demonstrating, sitting-in, and anything that will make our voices heard!

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really viable avenue for effecting social change. Magistrate Grimsley had no intention of considering the Constitutionality of the regulations "violated," not to mention the guilt of the Pentagon. Grimsley's role was to sanction the repressive, self-protective arrests used by the Pentagon to counter political dissent, while at the same time not giving harsh sentences which might provoke an unfavorable public reaction. The courts effect change only after public support has been demonstrated in favor of the changes—it only sanctions victories that have, in actuality, already been won. The "leniency" with which Grimsley conducted the trial might serve to foster the illusion of freedom of expression, but his unwillingness to consider the real issues leaves little doubt as to who his friends are.

To date, no decision has been reached by the judge. Supposedly he is waiting for a transcript of the proceeding before making a decision.

Nancy Williams and John Cort were staff members of the Washington, DC, Walk office.

It's Ten Years Since A.J. Died

by Jim Peck

In his preface to **The Labor Wars**, Sid Lens writes: "Late in 1969 I took a plane to Washington to help prepare for the massive anti-war demonstration sponsored by the New Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam. A 20-year old student from the University of Wisconsin sitting next to me, was reading *Liberation* Magazine. *Liberation* was founded by the late A.J. Muste, the octogenarian who also was the leading figure in the emergence of the present anti-war movement. I was surprised to learn that the student had never heard of Muste—though Muste was less than three years dead. I'm sure this is also true of at least 90 or 95% of those who today consider themselves part of the anti-war movement."

Sid Lens's "today" was less than three years after A.J.'s death and at the very peak of the movement to end the Vietnam war. February 11, 1977, is 10 years after A.J.'s death and in peacetime, when the Movement inevitably shrinks to its minimum. So, today, A.J. is remembered by even fewer than in 1969.

This, despite the fact that A.J. is one of the four *greats* of nonviolence in America in the post-world war II era. The other three are Cesar Chavez, Dorothy Day and Martin Luther King Jr. Chavez, despite an assassination attempt, is still alive and active at the helm of the United Farm Workers, so he has not been forgotten. Dorothy Day is still alive. King, who was assassinated 14 months after A.J.'s death, is not forgotten because he has been memorialized by Establishment blacks and liberal Establishment whites, most of whom opposed his nonviolent militancy during his lifetime. Also, the gains made by the civil rights movement are more concrete and visible than those made by the peace movement. The south, formerly like an enclave of South Africa, was desegregated in the early 1960s by the lunch counter sitins, the Freedom Rides, the mass marches and various other nonviolent protests. Blacks were elected to local office for the first time since Reconstruction.

The peace movement's most tangible victory of that same period was the Test Ban Treaty, under which the US, the Soviet Union and Great Britain agreed to cease nuclear testing in the atmosphere. This was the result of world-wide protest action climaxed by the great Aldermaston March in England in 1962. In the US the direct action, organized by the Committee for Nonviolent Action (and supported by WRL), was augmented and solidified by A.J.'s leadership.

In CNVA—and in the many other committees on which he served—A.J. had a really special talent. He would listen, carefully, to what each person had to say. Then, he would come-up with clear, logical solutions acceptable to the entire group. Somehow, he rose above the invariable infighting which occurs in committees. Possibly this was because his integrity became impressed even upon those who disagreed with him politically.

I remember one day, when our office was still on Beekman Street, I was walking to the elevator with Fred Halsted, who was one of the leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and a leader, along with A.J. of the Fifth Avenue Peace Parade Committee, the New York coalition against the Vietnam war. "I disagree completely with A.J. politically," Halsted said, "but I'm impressed with his total integrity." This anecdote helps to explain how come the national coalition against the Vietnam war remained unified, under A.J.'s leadership, but split in two soon after he

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Photo by Bradford Lyttle.

died.

Probably it was this same integrity which in 1961 prompted Soviet officials to permit the San Francisco-to-Moscow walkers to cross their border and walk right into Moscow with placards in Russian: "No Tests East or West." Nobody in the Movement but A.J. could have negotiated this. And A.J. was not "slick." He had no charisma. He was not much of a public speaker. Yet, his integrity always came through.

A.J. was not content merely to be a planning committee strategist: he was in the action itself. I have had the honor of being busted with him in several demonstrations over the years. But my outstanding memory of A.J. in action was Hiroshima Day, 1957, when we vigiled and committed CD at the nuclear test site in Nevada. We arrived in Las Vegas the weekend before, to conduct training sessions and arouse community support. Despite the intense heat, A.J., then 72, worked day and night visiting local ministers and community leaders, negotiating with the state and local police regarding the demonstration itself—and attending the last-minute CNVA committee meetings on logistics. Then, when the vigil started at dawn, A.J. was there. And he was there all through the torrid day and the long night until early next morning when the nightmarish bomb exploded and the vigil ended.

I am sorry that Nat Hentoff's biography of A.J., Peace Agitator, *is out of print. But we still have available* Essays of A.J. Muste, *edited by Nat Hentoff (\$3.45),* Liberation *Magazine's A.J. Memorial Issue (50¢) and A.J.'s noted essay,* Of Holy Disobedience *(30¢).*

A.J. MUSTE MEMORIAL INSTITUTE

Several years ago in seeking to find a way to establish a lasting tribute to A.J. Muste, there was established the A.J. Muste Memorial Institute—a tax exempt Institute whose activities would cover a range from publishing pacifist literature to arranging forums on political topics, from maintaining a library of pacifist materials to funding projects, seminars, workshops to spread the pacifist position. Tax deductible contributions payable to A.J. Muste Memorial Institute should be sent to 339 Lafayette Street, New York, NY 10012.

The Return of Legalized Murder ?

by Deborah Levy

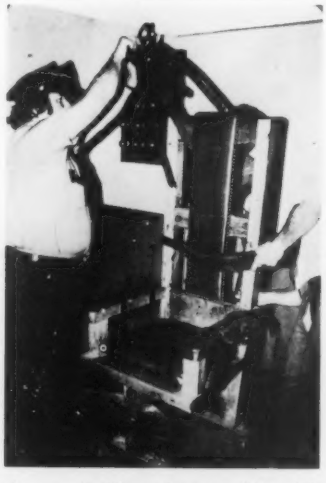
WASHINGTON POST, July 23: Florida officials, anticipating that executions will be resumed there eventually, announced plans yesterday for a course of seminars to give death row inmates psychological preparation for facing the electric chair.

On July 2, the U.S. Supreme Court reopened the doors of execution chambers all across the country. Some 425 men and women, *all of them poor, most of them nonwhite,* are in imminent jeopardy of being dragged across that threshold, screaming in fear or dulled beyond endurance, to be killed by electric current or poison gas. The Court has ruled their deaths Constitutional, despite the reasonable doubt of millions of Americans and the two Justices who voted in opposition.

For the past decade, the effort to abolish capital punishment has been concentrated on litigation, on trying to persuade the courts that the death penalty violates the equal protection, due process, and cruel and unusual punishment clauses of the Constitution. That effort has now ended in failure.

Other states, including some that have had their statutes declared invalid and a number that have not had capital punishment laws for some years, have begun the process of enacting statutes that conform to the Supreme Court decisions.

The Oklahoma legislature enacted such a law in a special session called for that purpose by the Governor. Louisiana also moved swiftly to re-enact, and legislative battles are



shaping up in New Jersey, New York, Illinois, Virginia, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, California, New Mexico, and Hawaii, to start with.

Execution dates have been set for more than a dozen death row inmates in Georgia and Texas, and Gary Gilmore finally got the state of Utah and its eager volunteer firing squad to grant his death wish.

Methods other than litigation are now urgently needed to prevent executions and to restrain the growing tendency to enact new death penalty laws.

In marshalling a counter-offensive, the War Resisters League has joined with some forty other national organizations in the formation of the National Coalition Against the Death Penalty (NCADP).

Four priorities for action have been outlined for the coalition:

1. To obtain executive clemency for everyone facing execution.

2. To provide sociological and criminological material to legislators, state executives and community leaders and to persuade them to prevent executions and abolish the death penalty.

3. To sustain a vigorous campaign of advocacy and public education against capital punishment, and

4. To create an information network concerning execution dates, capital sentences imposed, capital trials scheduled, and legislative developments.

The coalition is maintaining close coordination with the NAACP Legal

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Defense and Educational Fund, which continues to bear the chief burden of pursuing the remaining courtroom remedies.

The first organizing task of the NCADP has been to set up state coalitions, particularly in those states that have or propose to have capital laws. It is in the inner offices of the state governors that the decisions about clemency will be made. It is in the state legislatures that the battles will be fought to prevent the reenactment of death penalty laws or to minimize the deadly effect of new statutes by amending them with essential procedural safeguards.

To prevent executions in their home states, WRL members should get in touch with ACLU state offices (which are acting as liaisons for state coalitions) in order to participate in the work of the state coalitions against the death penalty. Informational and organizational material, including analyses of the new Supreme Court decisions and general anti-death penalty literature, will be available from state offices and NCADP (22 East 40th Street, New York, N.Y. 10016).

Already in the works is an Easter Witness Against Executions, to be held April 9 in Atlanta, the Saturday before Easter.* Plans call for a march from Ebenezer Baptist Church down Auburn Avenue to the Capitol. Easter morning there will be a prayer vigil. Organizing tasks have been taken on by the Southern Coalition on Jails and Prison, Box 12044, Nashville, Tennessee, 37212. This will be an important opportunity for those opposed to state-sanctioned murder to come forward and say, "No—not in our names!"

The remaining major countries in which capital punishment is imposed in the ordinary course of criminal justice are the Soviet Union, the Republic of South Africa, and the United States of America. Capital punishment is an answer to absolutely no problem that besets American society. Its abolition would be a significant step toward justice. And it would save lives.

Deborah Levy is on the staff of the National ACLU.

**Editor's note: Those who are unable to be in Atlanta, April 9, are encouraged to participate in or organize a vigil in their own area. In addition WRL members are urged to write letters to local papers, set up forums in their communities, devise guerilla theater skits, stage civil disobedience actions, or even cause a power shortage just before the time of execution in those states which use the electric chair.*

BOTH HIS GRANDFATHERS WERE COs IN CIVIL WAR

This unusual fact was revealed by a person who became aware of WRL when his son sent him a Peace Calendar as a gift.

Louis Taber, an Iowa City Quaker, has written us that both his maternal grandfather, William Shaw and his paternal grandfather, who had the same name as he, were COs in the Civil War.

Shaw was drafted involuntarily and sent to Camp Chase in Columbus, Ohio, where he and another CO refused to put on uniforms, to drill or to march. Taber quotes Shaw as telling his superior officers: "If you force me along, we'll have to go, but since I don't intend to kill anybody, there's no point in my learning the trade." Both were confined in the guard house, harassed and on one occasion threatened with death. But they stood firm and eventually were released by order of the Secretary of War.

Taber's paternal grandfather, though also a CO, never was apprehended.

FREE.....

WRLers who have a copy of Jim Peck's autobiography, UNDERDOGS VERSUS UPPERDOGS may obtain, free, a supplemental chapter updating it through the Continental Walk. Based on his experiences on the southern Walk, this chapter tells about the "new" South—15 years after the Freedom Rides. (Please enclose two 13¢ stamps for postage.....☐

For $1.50.....

WRLers who do NOT have the book can buy one, including the new chapter (and the chapter on the Vietnam war, inserted in July 1975). The book is a personal account of nonviolent direct action over the years through the eyes of an active participant. All proceeds go to WRL.....☐

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

KEY/ORGANIZERS LIST

The WRL Staff has revised its Key/Organizers List. We have combined the two previously existing lists. Our objective is to build one *activist* mailing list within WRL of people who are doing organizing (within or outside a WRL local) or are willing to do organizing whether that be passing out a leaflet, organizing a demonstration, or participating in a discussion group.

The Key/Organizers List will receive special mailings which include our monthly *WRL Organizers' Bulletin*, plus periodic action memos. If you are interested in being on this special list, fill out the coupon below and include $5 (per year) to cover postage and printing costs.

— — — — — — — — — —

Please add my name to the WRL Key/Organizers List. Enclosed you will find my $5 to cover mailing and printing costs.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

"U.S. OUT OF KOREA" DEMO

Photo by George Cohen, The Guardian.

Some 100 protesters marched in front of the South Korean Mission to the UN on Human Rights Day (Dec. 10) in the first New York demo since exposure of massive South Korean influence-peddling in the U.S. Sponsoring the protest was the Committee in Solidarity with the Korean People, a coalition of a number of peace groups (including WRL), and third world groups.

PRACTICE NONVIOLENCE TAGS IN JAMAICA

WRL's PRACTICE NONVIOLENCE tags soon will be appearing in Jamaica, the Caribbean island which was the scene of considerable violence during recent elections.

100 of the tags are part of a literature order just shipped to Esmine Jones of the Peace Action Center in Kingston. In placing the order, Jones wrote: "We are a young group seeking your assistance in a situation where fear, violence and killing have taken hold."

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WRL STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The War Resisters League affirms that war is a crime against humanity. We therefore are determined not to support any kind of war, international or civil, and to strive nonviolently for the removal of all the causes of war.

☐ I support this statement and wish to enroll as a member of the **war resisters league.**

signature.....

address.....

city.....

state.....zip code.....

Send to War Resisters League
339 Lafayette Street
New York, N.Y. 10012

WRL Group List

REGIONAL OFFICE

WRL WEST, 1380 Howard Street, San Francisco, CA 94103

LOCAL GROUPS

LOS ANGELES WRL, 350 S. Figueroa St. #277, LA, CA 90071

ATLANTA WRL, PO Box 7477, Atlanta, GA 30309

HAWAII WRL/cATHOLIC ACTION, 1918 University Ave., Honolulu, HI 95822

OAK PARK WRL, 712 N. Austin Blvd., Oak Park, IL 60302

WRL/DIRECT ACTION COMMITTEE, 2042 E. Virginia, Evansville, IN 47711

DETROIT WRL, 692 West Forest #6, Detroit, MI 48201

TWIN CITIES WRL, 2005 Vincent Ave. N., Minneapolis, MN 55411

ST. LOUIS WRL, 6099 Waterman, St. Louis, MO 63112

COLUMBIA WRL, 813 Maryland Ave., Columbia, MO 65201

ALBUQUERQUE WRL, 5021 Guadalupe Tr., Albuquerque, NM 87107

CHAPEL HILL WRL, 108-B Purefoy Rd., Chapel Hill, NC 27514

PHILADELPHIA WRL/WTR, 2016 Walnut, Philadelphia, PA 19103

AUSTIN WRL/DIRECT ACTION, PO Box 7161, Austin, TX 78712

SEATTLE WRL/WTR, 331 17 Ave. E., Seattle, WA 98112

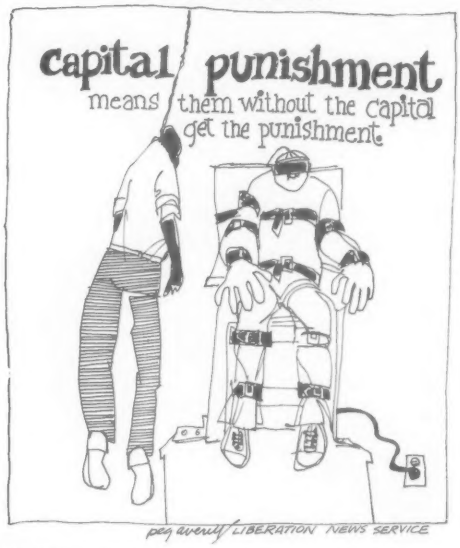
MILWAUKEE WRL, 4711 Lisbon Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53208

EC AND NC NOMINATIONS—DEADLINE MARCH 1

WRL members are invited to nominate candidates for the WRL executive national committee. Only persons in the New York City area should be nominated for the executive committee since they must be able to attend monthly meetings in this area. Members outside of the New York City area may be nominated for the national committee. Any five members can make a nomination. A nomination submitted by less than five is subject to approval of the executive committee. Please submit nominations to WRL office by March 1.

The following terms are expiring: executive committee—Bent Andresen, Lynne Shatzkin Coffin, Edna Coleman, Eileen Egan, Val Green, Neil Haworth, Lucia Vernarelli; national committee—Jim Bristol, Mark Looney, Lynn Lockhart, Jerry Wingate, Robert Calvert, Pat Hughes, Scott Kennedy, Morris Kight.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT LITERATURE KIT



For only $1.50 you can get:

1) the F.O.R. button reading: "WHY do we kill people who kill people to show that killing people is wrong?"

2) the Friends booklet, **This Life We Take**, the New ACLU pamphlet, **The Case Against The Death Penalty**;

3) a 2-color poster of the Peg Averill graphic displayed on this page.

☐ Please send me literature kit(s).

Enclosed is $_____ to cover costs.

Name_____

Address_____

City_____

State_____ Zip_____

THE CHRISTMAS VIGILS

On Christmas eve, Jim Peck participated in a candlelight vigil in New Orleans's beautiful old Jackson Square, located at the heart of the French Quarter. It was one of many southern vigils organized by Southern Coalition on Jails & Prisons in opposition to the death penalty.

He got a firsthand account of another vigil—in Birmingham—when he stopped off there on his return trip to New York and rapped with Judy Garrison, project director of Southern Organizing Committee. She said that the vigil there had gotten widespread coverage by the local media.

Other southern cities where vigils were held include Raleigh, Durham, Asheville, Charlotte, Greensboro (North Carolina has more prisoners on death row than any other state), Memphis, Atlanta, Louisville, Dallas, Jackson, Tallahassee, Columbia and Montgomery.

The Southern Coalition plans to keep right on raising what its director, Rev. Joseph Ingle of Nashville, calls "the moral, religious, and ethical issues involved in killing any human being."

The Utah Vigil

Some 60 persons from all parts of the country vigiled all night in Salt Lake City Jan. 16 on the eve of Gary Gilmore's execution. The execution was the first in 10 years in the U.S.

PARALYZED FREEDOM RIDER SUES FBI

by Jim Peck

Walter Bergman, still paralyzed from a stroke resulting from his 1961 beating on the first Freedom Ride, and his wife, Frances, who accompanied him on the ride, have filed a million dollar damage suit against the FBI on January 4 in Grand Rapids, his home. The amount is $400,000 more than that sought by me in a suit filed last March in New York. His attorney is William Goodman, president of the National Lawyers Guild. As in my case, Walter's suit is prompted by testimony in Washington in December 1975 that the FBI knew three weeks in advance about the Klan-planned assaults on the Freedom Riders, but took no preventive action.

Walter and I were sitting in the rear of a Trailways bus when, upon arrival in Anniston, Alabama, a group of men boarded it and violently removed the black Freedom Riders sitting in front, to rear seats. We both moved up front and interceded with our bodies. Each of us was clubbed over the head and thrown to the floor of the bus. I was not seriously injured (my beating, almost to death, came a couple of hours later after the bus reached Birmingham), and Walter thought he wasn't. But a few weeks later, he suffered a stroke which doctors traced to the Anniston beating. For years, he was confined to a wheelchair. Now, he can walk, with the aid of a walker.

Walter is a WRLer and long time pacifist. After World War I, he organized a pacifist American Legion post in Detroit and in 1931 engaged in his first demo—against compulsory ROTC at Wayne State University. During the Vietnam war, despite being paralyzed, he participated in a weekly vigil in Grand Rapids.

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